

REMARKS

Applicants have received and reviewed the Office Action mailed May 16, 2007. Claims 6 and 18 have been canceled. Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 13. Claims 1, 3-4, 7-13, 15-16, 19-25, 27-28, and 31-39 are pending, of which claims 1, 13 and 25 are independent. Applicants request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the amendments and the following remarks. Applicants also request that the Information Disclosure Statement being submitted with this response be considered, initialed and returned with the next Office communication.

Allowable Claims

Applicants appreciate Examiner Vaughn's indication that claims 25, 27, 28 and 31-36 are allowed. Applicants further appreciate the indication that claims 6 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have rewritten claims 6 and 18 in independent form. In particular, Applicants amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the language of claim 6, which previously depended directly from claim 1, and canceled claim 6. Applicants amended independent claim 13 to incorporate the language of claim 18, which previously depended directly from claim 13, and canceled claim 18. The amendments do not add any new matter.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is now allowable, as well as claims 3, 4, 7-12 and 37, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 1. Applicants further submit that claim 13 is now allowable, as well as claims 15, 16, 19-24, and 38, which depend directly or indirectly from claim 13.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 3, 4, 7-12, 15, 16, 19-24 and 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohnishi (US Patent Publication 2003/0187876) in view of Zak (US

Patent No. 5,265,207), in view of Bornemisza-Wahr (US Patent 6,073,119) and in view of Corneille (US Patent Publication 2005/0075115).

Claims 3, 4, 7-12, 15, 16, 19-24 and 37-38 are allowable, based on the amendments to claims 1 and 13, as addressed above.

Applicants believe that claim 39 was rejected in error. In particular, claim 39 depends from claim 25, which the Examiner indicated is allowed. Accordingly, claim 39 should also be allowable.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims 1, 3-4, 7-13, 15-16, 19-25, 27-28, and 31-39 are now in condition for allowance and request that the Examiner allow them.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to this amendment.

Applicants request that the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement being submitted with this response be considered, initialed and returned with the next Office communication.


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No fees are believed to be due at this time. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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